A sense of how this part of the city centre would have looked in the mid-6th c. is suggested by the axonometric drawing (fig. 17); it also shows the relationship between the baths and surrounding buildings. This carefully worked-out drawing, compiled after first establishing reconstructions of the individual structures, was only possible because of the amount of work the Polish team has published. As the baths have furnaces designed for local fuel such as rushes, one could suggest that the fuel included old papyri not unlike those previously re-cycled as mummy cartonnage. This could explain the origin of the legends that the Arabs used books from the library to fuel the city’s baths.

It is hoped that the above account will provide a more accurate basis for considering how some aspects of this famous city might be visualized.

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Appendix: Possible implications of the Egyptian word for Alexandria

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M. Depauw and M. Chauveau have published primary evidence that the Egyptian name for Alexandria, ρλαιον, vocalized approximately Rakote, means roughly "Construction (site)", and have discussed how such a meaning could be appropriate to indigenous Egyptian perceptions of the city. The name is attested from the beginning of the Ptolemaic period, in the Satrap Stela of 311 B.C., where Rakote is stated to be the "former (jntj)" name of Alexandria, which is given an Egyptian hieroglyphic name as "the fortress (sbt) of the Dual King (Merikare setopenamen), Son of Re (Alexander [IV])." That name is in an archaizing style

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1. M. Depauw, “Alexandria, the building yard,” Chréq 75 (2000) 64-65; M. Chauveau, “Alexandrie et Rhakote: le point de vue des Egyptiens,” in J. Lecant (ed.), Alexandria, une mégapole cosmopolite (Paris 1999) 1-10. Their interpretation was to some extent anticipated by J. Quaegebuer, "Rakote," in W. Helek and W. Westendorf (edds.), Lexicon der Ägyptologie V (Wiesbaden 1994) 30-31, and L. Pantalacci, "Remarques sur les composés de type ρλαιον ..." Orienta-Lingusticae Periodica 16 (1985) esp. 15-16 n.31, citing J. Yoyotte. For non-Egyptologists it may be useful to note that the optional ρλαιον is an archaizing element that would not have been pronounced. Demotic does not distinguish d and ρ, and the transliteration used in discussions varies between the two. For consistency with the hieroglyphic writing, I write ρλαιον.